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HICKORY ROCK CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

History Writing Recognition

Presented to

Historical Committee

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

Excerpt from

DEVELOPING A TWO-YEAR CHURCH GROWTH PLAN FOR A RURAL CHURCH

A Project in Ministry Report

for the

Doctor of Ministry Degree

by

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Louisburg, N. C.

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THE HICKORY ROCK CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Church History Profile

On Sunday August 1, 1915, a meeting was held at Hickory Rock Academy to organize a missionary Baptist church. Rev. George Duke presided over the meeting, Mr. G. B. West acted as clerk and Rev. J.H. Harper as reading clerk. The minutes of the first meeting read, "The name of the new church is Hickory Rock."¹

Charter members were Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Dennis, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Joyner, A. B. Inscoe, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Inscoe, Mrs. R. H. Bobbitt, Miss Clara Bobbitt, J. R. Joyner, Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Gupton, Asbury Dennis, Frank Dennis, Mary Dennis, Jake Dennis, and Mrs. O. B. Ball.²

The first deacons of the newly founded church were W. J. Dennis and J. R. Joyner, while A. B. Inscoe became the first church clerk. Rev. George Duke was called as the first pastor. As recorded in the first minutes of the newly formed church, "brother Harper then read the rules of decorum." The rules of decorum were as follows:

1. It shall be the duty of the pastor to act as moderator for the church.
2. Conference shall be opened by prayer then business will be attended in order.
3. It shall be the duty of the deacons to see that the pastor is provided for. It shall also be their duty to settle all

¹A. B. Inscoe, Church Clerk, "Minutes of Hickory Rock Baptist Church"; August 1, 1915; Louisburg, NC, page 3.

²Ibid.

difficulties between members of the church.

4. All church matters shall be brought in by the deacons.
5. It shall be the duty of the clerk to keep a record of the proceedings of the church with a role of the members names, white and black separate.
6. No member shall be received in the church without relating an experience of grace, except by letter, then by the consent of the church and moderator giving the right hand of fellowship.
7. No member shall leave the house without the consent of the moderator.
8. Every member of the church both male and female shall attend every communion day and commune if they can.
9. No motion shall be debated until it meets with a second. No member shall speak without rising from his seat and addressing the moderator by appellation of "brother."
10. It shall be the duty of the church to commune quarterly. The members shall form the church and transact business. A majority of the members present shall rule in all cases except in receiving a member then one may object.
11. The rules shall be read Saturday before each communion day.
12. None but one shall speak at the same time.
13. It shall be a violation of the rules for any member to whisper while a brother is speaking.
14. If any member shall know of a brother committing a public sin he shall report it to the deacons.
15. It shall be the duty of the church to have the church covenant read once each year at some suitable time.³

The new church was constituted and accepted into the Tar River Association in 1915. Church services were held in the Hickory Rock Academy until a new building could be constructed. In the fall of 1915 the hopes and dreams of a church began to take place as construction on

³ Ibid., 1-2.

the new building began. Members donated both time and timber. W. J. Dennis sawed the timber for the church. R. D. Williams was the head carpenter. W. J. Dennis, R. D. Williams, and E. H. Gupton provided the leadership, and the other fifteen charter members worked hard and completed construction of the new church in the spring of 1916. The structure was a one room building with two wood heaters supplying the heat. The new church met the third Saturday and Sunday of each month until October 14, 1922. On that day, the church voted to meet the second and fourth Sunday afternoons each month.

Rev. George M. Duke's health declined until he had to sit to bring God's message. Yet, he blessed the church by continuing to serve as pastor until much of the building was completed.

A. B. Inscoe, the first Church Clerk, recorded the quality of the pastor's sermon in the minutes of the business meetings in an interesting way. He described the messages as acceptable, very acceptable, adequate, and on rare occasions, an excellent sermon. Throughout the minutes he refers to the church as Hickory Rock Missionary Baptist Church.

At a business conference on June 26, 1920, the minutes read that one of the members "was before the church for being intoxicated, church forgave him and to hold him in good fellowship."⁴ At a business conference on the fourth Sunday in January, 1921, another brother was restored to the church after asking forgiveness for being intoxicated. At the same conference, a committee was appointed to visit a brother

⁴Ibid., 201.

concerning his being intoxicated.⁵

The first records of the pastor's salary were entered in 1920 when the pastor earned \$150 per year. The church kept detailed records as to how much each member contributed toward this amount. Several times in the early nineteen-twenties and thirties the collected amount was not enough to meet the budgeted salary and the difference was carried over to the next year.

Rev. Sanky Blanton was a student at Wake Forest College when he came to Hickory Rock to serve as pastor in 1923. This was the first church he served in Franklin County. In 1932, Rev. Clarence H. Patrick was called as pastor.

The church added a new side wing for Sunday School rooms in 1934. The Uniform Associational Letter for the year ending 1935 contained some very interesting statistics. Reverend John Edward's salary was \$175 for the year. There were 101 church members and 100 Sunday School members. There were six members added to the church and one lost by letter in 1935. The Lord's Supper was celebrated only once during the year. Sunday School attendance averaged forty five. In 1935, Hickory Rock was still a one room church unchanged from the original construction of 1917.

Under the leadership of Pastor Jack Roe, who came along in 1947, the church made plans for major renovations. The plans were not carried out until sometime after Rev. Wiley C. Guthrie became pastor in 1950. Accomplishment of these plans included removal of the side wing for Sunday School, adding six Sunday School rooms, bricking the church, and

⁵Ibid., 203.

installing a heating plant.

The minutes of the 1950 annual session of the Tar River Association list Wiley C. Guthrie as having been pastor for two years. There are some other interesting facts in these minutes. The church met only on the first and third Sundays. The pastor's salary was \$1,000 per year. Five new members were added that year and four were lost. There were 107 resident members and 110 enrolled in Sunday School. The Sunday School average attendance was fifty-one.⁶

A 1950 bulletin reported that one of the intermediates celebrated the ending of the commencement exercises of the Daily Vacation Bible School by saying, "Whew! I'm glad that is over with." At that time pupils in VBS were given an oral examination at the commencement service. Mrs. Myrtle Parrish was VBS principal that year. Some of the pupils that year were, Intermediates: Billy Rowe, Charlotte Rowe, Jo Ann Gupton, and Donald Frazier; Juniors: Dickie Moore, Jerry Rowe, J. B. Perdue, Bob Gupton, and Dorothy Bobbitt; and Primaries: Ben Parrish, Jimmy Perdue, and Susan Bobbitt.⁷

In 1951, the church held homecoming and the beginning of revival week on July 2. Rev. Clyde Chapman was the guest speaker, Rev. Wiley C. Guthrie was pastor. Homecoming money went to pay for the organ that was purchased in 1950. A new piano was added in 1955 and a new carpet was

⁶From a bulletin insert for Harvest Day October 18, 1987 "Reflections from our Past." Rick Cato was pastor and Jack Sammons was the visiting preacher.

⁷Ibid.

installed in the sanctuary in 1957.⁸

Much construction and refurbishment was achieved in the 1960's. The church added a front porch onto the sanctuary in 1960. Three years later the sanctuary was remodeled and a new education building was completed. During the fall of 1966 the church installed a new heating and air conditioning unit in the sanctuary. Only two years later, in the fall of 1968, the sanctuary was dressed up with a new carpet and stained glass windows. The same year, a lot was donated for building a parsonage. The parsonage was completed in 1969 and first occupied by Rev. Clay Cook and family.⁹

Paying off the parsonage and building a fellowship hall occupied the church for most of the 1970's. The church celebrated paying off the parsonage in October 1973. The next year, central air conditioning was installed in both the parsonage and the educational building. And in 1976, the church built a fellowship hall.¹⁰

The church experienced plenty of activity in the 1980's. Beginning in 1980, the sanctuary was perked up with a gift of beautiful chandeliers. Rev. Everett L. Rumley, Jr. was called as pastor in 1981. The next year, 1982, was filled with activity as the church cushioned the pews, covered the floor of the fellowship hall, and put a new roof on the educational building. Rev. Rick Cato was called as pastor in

⁸ Jeanette Rowe, "History--Hickory Rock Baptist Church," in Minutes of the Tar River Baptist Association, North Carolina, 1967, (Jefferson City, MO.: Missouri Baptist Press, 1967), 44-45; and Jeanette Rowe, "History of Hickory Rock Baptist Church," in 1977 Minutes Tar River Baptist Association, North Carolina. n.p., 1977.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

January, 1984. Later that year, the half-circle driveway was poured.

Things began to happen again in 1987. A new carpet was installed in all Sunday School rooms, and the tile floor was replaced in the fellowship hall. Rev. Bill Poole served as interim pastor from 1987 until 1988. In 1988, a wheel chair ramp was built, the front porch was renovated, and playground equipment was bought. Rev. Donald Godfrey was called as pastor in 1988. In 1989, the church added a sound system, bought a baptistry, poured a walkway between the sanctuary and fellowship hall, and installed a storage building at the parsonage.

Profile of the Pastors

God has richly blessed the people and pastors of Hickory Rock through the years. The people of this church have maintained a vital ministry to student pastors, and cultivated a warm fellowship, while seeking Christian growth in both quality and quantity.¹¹ Even though the church has always been small in number, it has always been blessed with dedicated and outstanding leaders. Table 1 lists the pastors of Hickory Rock Baptist Church since 1915.

¹¹ Ibid.

TABLE 1

PASTORS OF HICKORY ROCK¹²

<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Year</u>
George M. Duke	1915	Sherrill Stevens	1953
B. E. Morris	1920	Leonard H. Miller	1954
W. R. Wallace	1921	John Carter	----
Sanky L. Blanton	1923	H. Ellis Lanier	1957
J. Clyde Yates	1929	Henry C. Green, Jr.	1959
Fred R. Poplin	1931	Roy O. Swift	1963
Clarence H. Patrick	1932	Sam P. Wall	1964
C. W. Teague	1934	Herman L. Thomas, Jr.	1966
C. H. Norris	1934	Charles C. Conway, Jr.	1967
John Edwards	1934	L. Clay Cook	1969
----- Cooper	----	James R. Harrington, Jr.	1972
W. W. Brookshire	----	Jack Sammons	1974
Clyde Chapman	----	Jerry Bryant	1978
Harold Steen	1945	Everett L. Rumley, Jr.	1981
Jack Roe	1947	Rick Cato	1984
Wiley C. Guthrie	1950	Donald L. Godfrey, Sr.	1988

George M. Duke

Rev. Duke was called and served as the first pastor of Hickory Rock Baptist Church. He was called a prince among preachers. He was born in Warren County, North Carolina on August 8, 1845. He was one of sixteen children of Mark Duke and Nancy (Pitchford) Duke of the Reedy Creek section. His grandparents were Myrick and Dolly Duke. George Duke was married twice. His first marriage was a very happy time spent with Miss Mollie Avant of Nash County until her death. His second wife was Miss Martha Elmira Drake.¹³

¹² From a bulletin insert for Harvest Day October 18, 1987 "Reflections from our Past." Information was revised and updated with the annual minutes of the Tar River Baptist Association Annual Minutes from 1949 to 1989.

¹³ Thomas J. Taylor, A History of the Tar River Association 1830 - 1921, (n.p., n.d.), 173.

Rev. Duke was educated at the Warrenton Male Academy, but his education was permanently interrupted when the Civil War began. He volunteered in April 1861 as a Confederate soldier in the Warren Guards which later became Company F, Twelfth North Carolina Regiment. He was a good soldier and brought back a reputation for faithfulness, unselfishness, and bravery.

George Duke's conversion came during his time in the Confederate Army in 1863. Rev. J. G. Barkley baptized him in the Rappahannock River. After his baptism, he became a member of Reedy Creek Church where he was licensed to the gospel ministry and ordained in May 1867.¹⁴

He served churches in Warren, Nash, Halifax, and Franklin counties, but most of his time was spent in Franklin County pastorates. A number of his pastorates continued through many years. His longest pastorates were at Mount Zion (forty-one years), Sandy Creek, Poplar Springs, Cedar Rock and Maple Springs (forty-five years). Rev. Duke served as pastor of Hickory Rock Baptist Church from its organization in 1915 until his death in 1918.

He served as moderator of the Tar River Association for ten consecutive years from October 1908 until his death in 1918. George Duke was very popular and tenderly loved by the people. He was always supportive of the state convention, Wake Forest College, Meredith College, and the Thomasville Orphanage. It was not unusual for him to receive offers to go to large town churches, but he always said that he

¹⁴ Ibid., 174.

would prefer to stay with the country churches.¹⁵ Dr. T. J. Taylor describes him as follows:

But above everything else he was a preacher. He was a God-made preacher, and he loved to preach the gospel that saves. Among preachers he was a prince--he had the spirit of a poet, the tongue of an orator, and the mind of a great thinker. He loved the people, and he was tenderly loved by thousands who are sad; because they will see the face of George M. Duke no more on earth.¹⁶

George Mark Duke died at the residence of his son-in-law, Thomas H. Cheek, near Inez in Warren County July 22, 1918. He was seventy-three years old.

An earlier history of Hickory Rock from the Tar River Annual includes the following paragraph. This entry was written by a church member who plainly describes the hope of the people of Hickory Rock Baptist Church.

Striving daily to grow in wisdom and grace, we trust that always our hearts and minds will ever look to God for guidance in whatever our task may be. We thank God for those who have been called to serve. From the beginning, we have been blessed with outstanding pastors, who have created within us a knowledge of religion. Our inspirations have been great and our aspirations are greater still.¹⁷

Church Membership Profile

The "Church Data Questionnaire" was administered to church members present during the worship service on Sunday, November 5, 1989.

¹⁵ Ibid., 175.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Jeanette Rowe, "History--Hickory Rock Baptist Church," in Minutes of the Tar River Baptist Association, North Carolina, 1967, (Jefferson City, MO.: Missouri Baptist Press, 1967), 45.

The questionnaire was used to produce Tables 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10.¹⁸

Age of Membership

Table 2 lists active member's ages. The average age of the church members is forty-five years. The average age of the deacons is fifty-nine years. The church has few children under twelve years of age. Notice that thirty-eight percent of the members are over sixty years old.

TABLE 2

AGE OF ACTIVE MEMBERS

<u>Age</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Percent</u>
under 12	0%	40-49	10%
12-17	8%	50-59	8%
18-29	21%	60-69	23%
30-39	15%	70-up	15%

Proximity of Members to the Church

Table 3 records the proximity of members to the church. Living patterns show that members live in all directions and as far away as twenty miles. Notice that thirty-nine percent of the members live within two miles of the church. Seventy-three percent live within a five mile radius.

¹⁸ The "Church Data Questionnaire" was used with permission of Dr. Harry H. Fowler, Creative Growth Dynamics, 129 Gulftide Court, Rocky Mount, NC 27801.

Table 3

PROXIMITY OF MEMBERS TO THE CHURCH

<u>Miles Distance from Church</u>	<u>Percent of Members</u>
Less than 1	18%
1-2	21%
3-5	34%
6-10	16%
11-20	5%
Over 20	5%

Educational Level

Table 4 shows the educational level of the church members. Eighty-three percent of the members are high school graduates. Forty-eight percent have had some college.

Table 4

EDUCATION OF CHURCH MEMBERS

<u>Educational Level</u>	<u>Percent of Members</u>
Less than high school	17%
High school graduate	35%
Some college	38%
College graduate	10%

Family Income

Table 5 shows the income of church families. Forty-seven percent of the families have incomes over \$30,000. The average family income is about \$ 28,000.

Table 5

FAMILY INCOME OF CHURCH MEMBERS

<u>Income Level</u>	<u>Percent of Members</u>
Under \$10,000	5%
10,000 - 14,999	14%
15,000 - 19,999	17%
20,000 - 24,999	14%
25,000 - 29,999	3%
30,000 - 39,999	22%
Over \$40,000	25%

Length of Membership

Table 6 shows the lengths of church membership. Forty-nine percent of the people have been members at Hickory Rock for more than twenty years. Sixty-seven percent have been members over ten years. Andy Anderson's length of membership test shows these huge percentages as an indicator of little church growth--the church is dying.

Table 6

LENGTH OF MEMBERSHIP

<u>Years of Membership</u>	<u>Percent of Members</u>
Less than 1	13%
1-2	10%
3-5	3%
6-10	8%
11-20	18%
Over 20	49%

Church Staff

The pastor is the only full-time employee. The church employs two part-time janitorial workers.

Finances

The tithes and offerings average \$600 to \$650 per week. Cooperative Program and associational missions offerings are each less than one percent of the annual church budget. However, during 1989, the church gave \$1065 to victims of Hurricane Hugo and over \$2500 to home and foreign missions. The 1989 annual church budget was \$25,560.

Other Church Data

Table 7 includes a listing of general statistics of the church, the Sunday School and new members. Information from this table was used to produce Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, and Table 9. The data in Table 7 was collected from annual Tar River Association meeting minutes and a study done by Rev. Bill Wallace.

TABLE 7

OTHER CHURCH DATA¹⁹

Parameter	Year	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976
Church Members		152	150	151	146	145	147
Resident Members		100	100	100	93	98	100
S.S. Enrollment		91	87	79	72	72	75
Avg. S.S. Atten.		45	48	50	46	44	51
Baptisms		1	1	1	0	2	1
Other Additions		0	4	0	2	1	3

Parameter	Year	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Church Members		147	146	143	141	137	140	139
Resident Members		102	101	100	99	94	93	-
S.S. Enrollment		96	83	80	86	74	73	83
Avg. S.S. Atten.		54	54	55	53	48	-	-
Baptisms		2	1	3	2	0	1	0
Other Additions		2	5	1	2	0	5	1

Parameter	Year	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
Church Members		136	136	142	144	144	149
Resident Members		90	86	91	93	93	98
S.S. Enrollment		79	79	81	75	82	84
Avg. S.S. Atten.		46	47	48	46	45	45
Baptisms		1	3	5	3	2	0
Other Additions		2	1	4	1	3	7

Figure 1 is a graph of total and resident church membership.

These two categories experienced little variation between 1977 and 1989. Resident membership began at a high of 102 in 1977 during the pastorate of Jack Sammons. It dipped to a low of 86 in the first year (1985) and then climbed to 93 in the second and third years of the pastorate of Rick Cato. Resident membership ended up at 98 in 1989.

¹⁹ Part of this data was taken from a study done by the Director of Missions, Tar River Association, Rev. Bill Wallace. The study was done for Hickory Rock Baptist Church for the years 1977 through 1986.

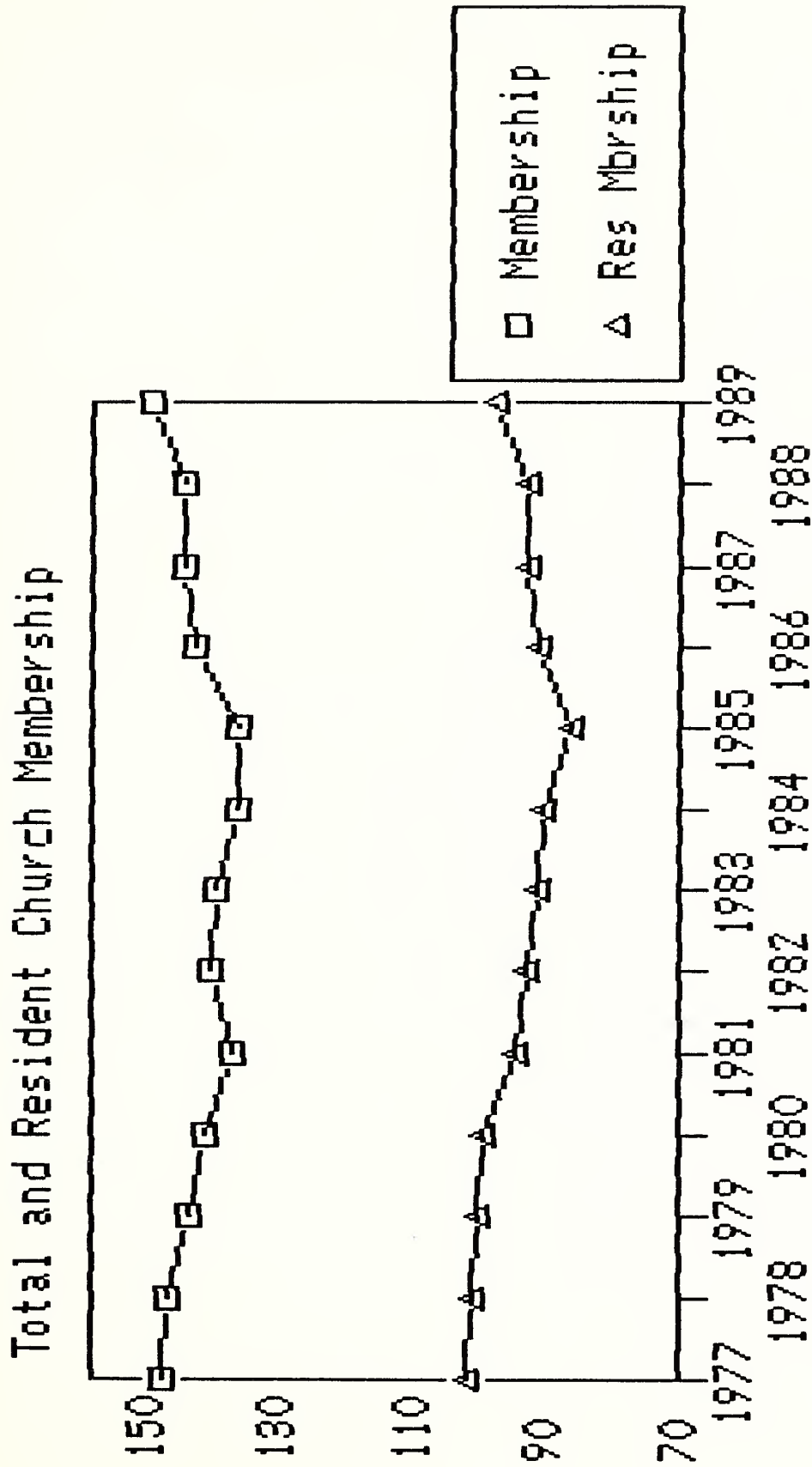


Figure 1. Total and Resident Church Membership

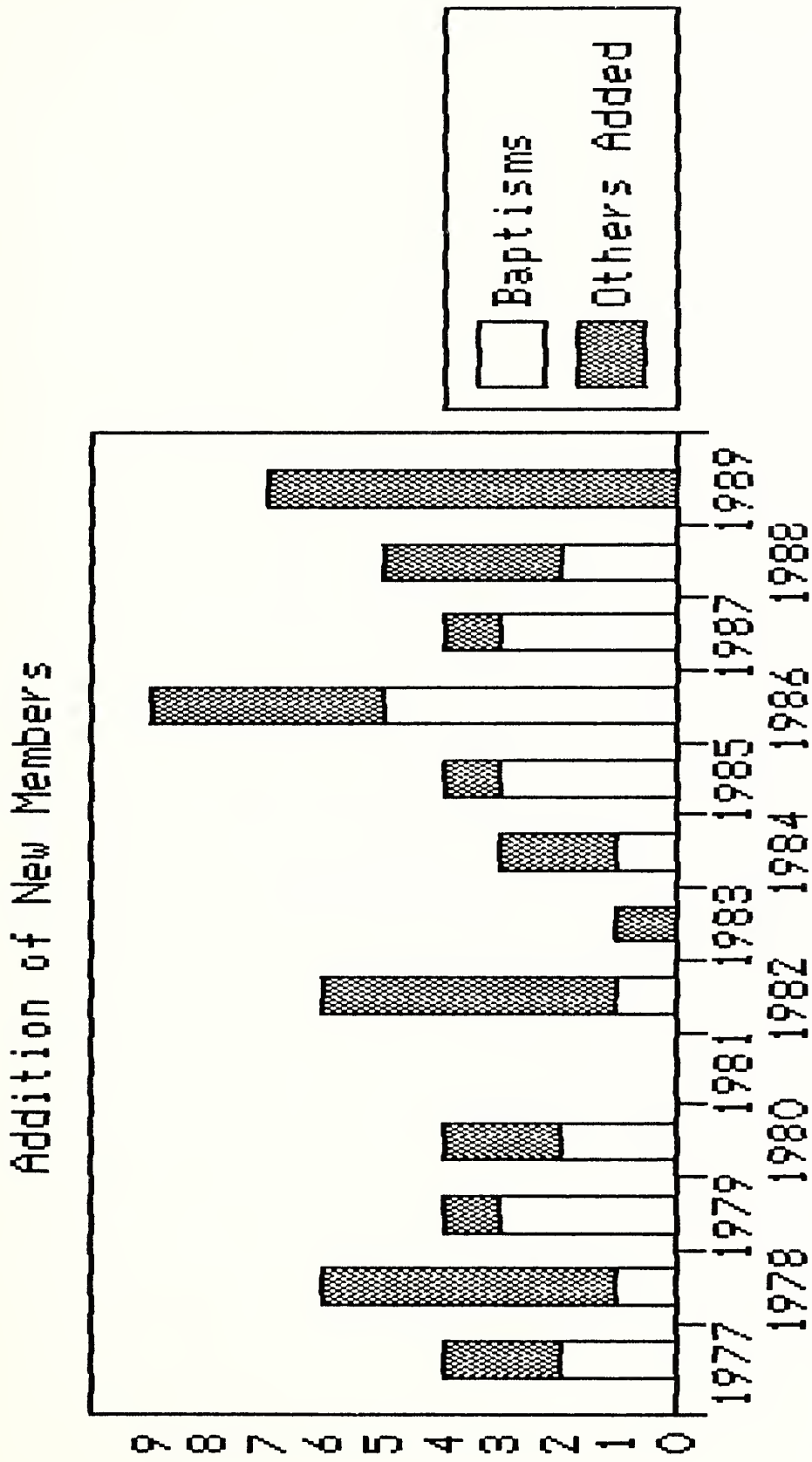


Figure 2. Addition of New Members

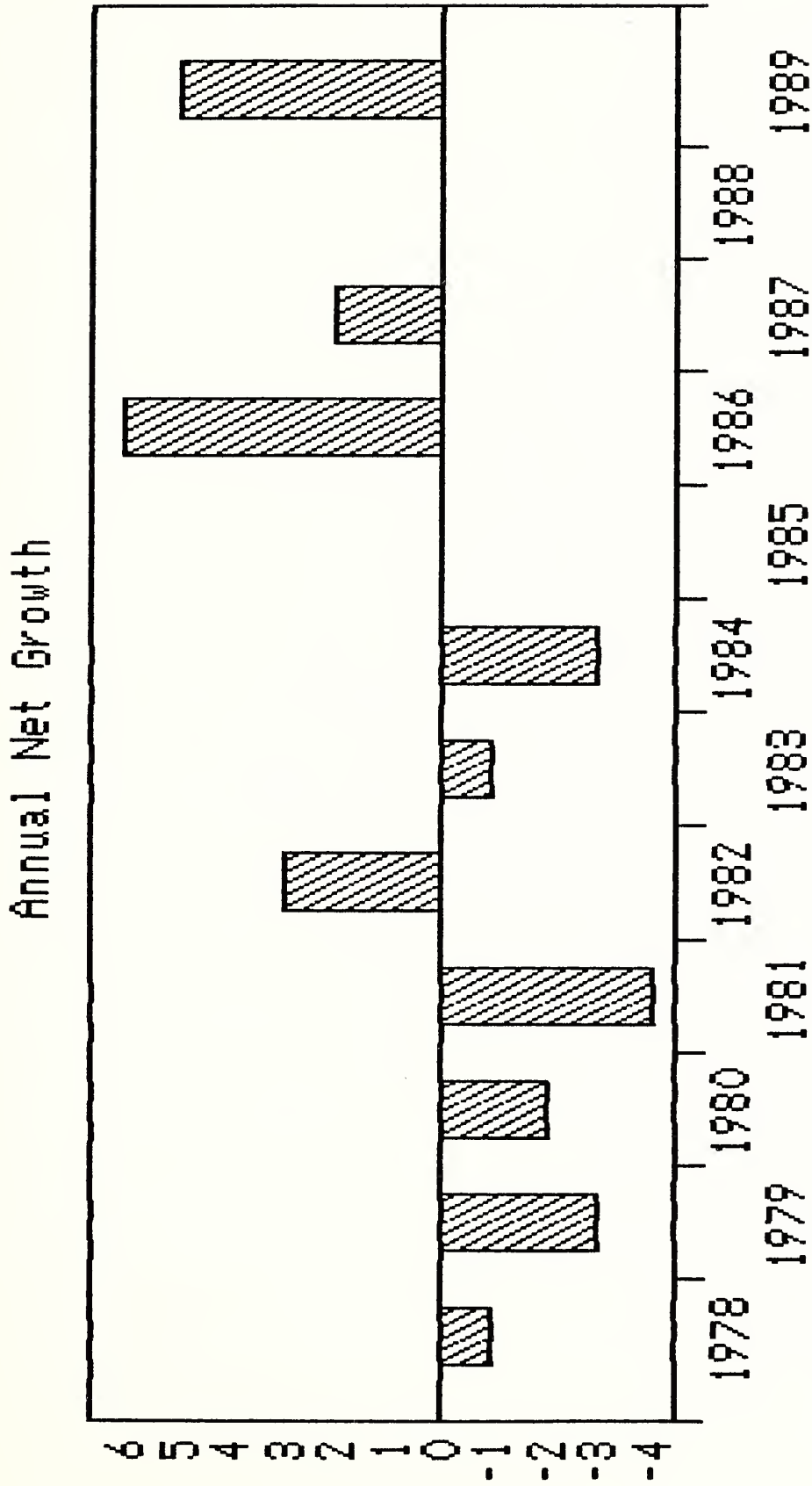


Figure 3. Annual Net Growth

Figure 2 depicts the addition of new members for the years 1977 through 1989. In ten of the thirteen years, four or more members were added each year. There were additions to the church every year except 1981. Out of ninety-five resident members, baptisms have averaged 1.8 per year since 1977. According to Andy Anderson's baptism test, this shows the lack of a burden for unsaved persons in the community.

Figure 3 is a graph of annual net growth. This graph is a better picture of church growth or decline than Figure 2 since losses are also considered. The church grew in 1982, 1986, 1987, and 1989. It declined in 1978 through 1981, 1983 and 1984.

Sunday School Profile

Sunday School Structure

The Sunday School structure is shown in Table 8. The school is age graded and organized into eight classes.

TABLE 8

SUNDAY SCHOOL STRUCTURE

<u>Class</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Men	7	7
Women	23	15
Adult Co-Ed II	14	12
Adult Co-Ed I	11	5
Youth	6	3
Boys	6	5
Girls	6	1
Preschool	1	1

Sunday School Enrollment and Average Attendance

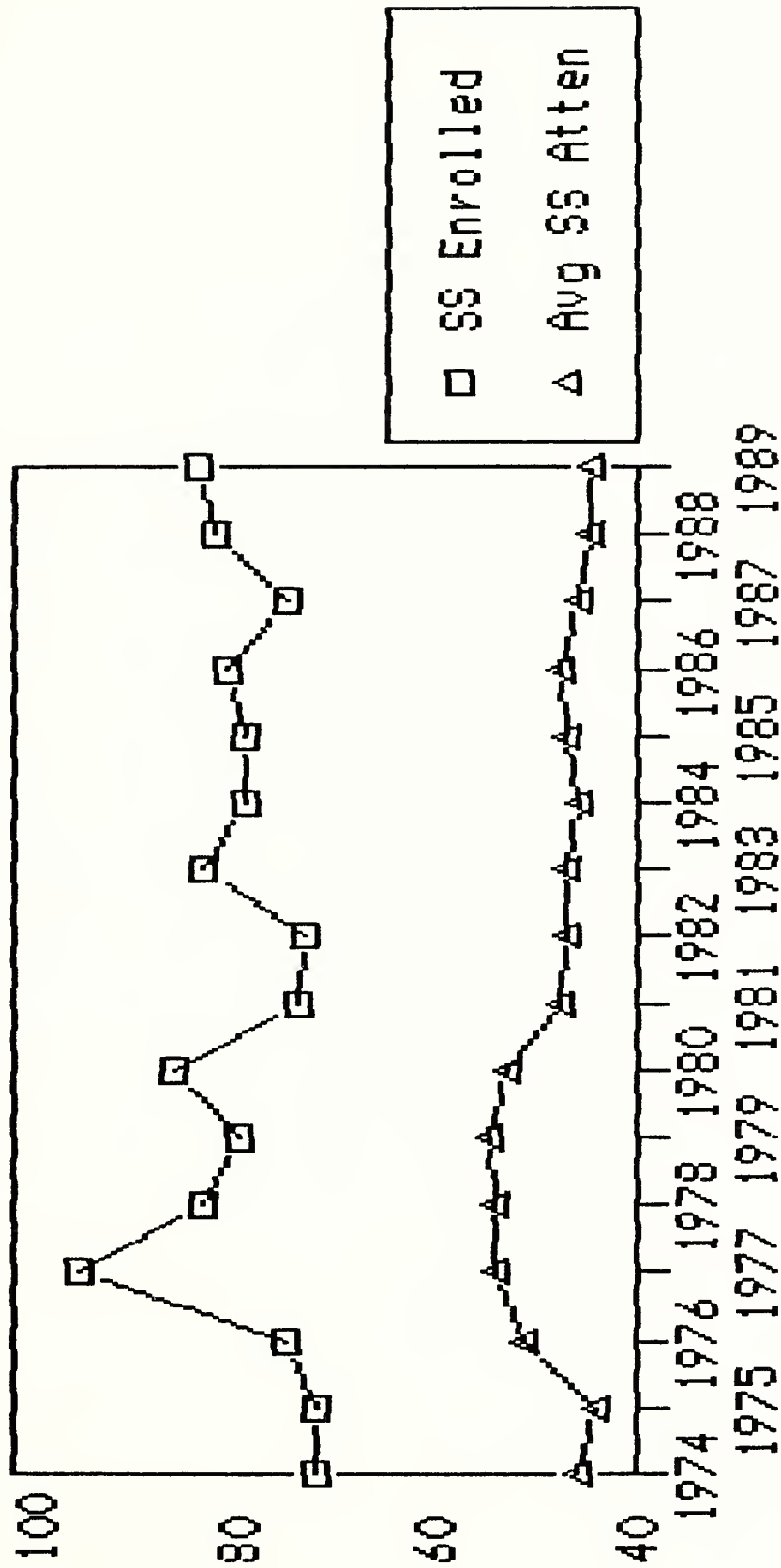


Figure 4. Sunday School Enrollment and Average Attendance

Attendance and Enrollment

Figure 4 and Table 9 both display the Sunday School attendance and enrollment from 1974 to 1989. Attendance has averaged forty-nine and the enrollment eighty-one over the last thirteen years. Graph numbers for figure 4 were taken from table 9. Attendance is highest for the years 1976 through 1980. These are the pastorates of Jack Sammons and Jerry Bryant. The Numbers Test of Chaney and Lewis shows that resident membership and Sunday School enrollment have grown since 1985. Sunday School attendance is presently at a standstill. The results of this test indicate growth since 1985.

TABLE 9

SUNDAY SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

<u>Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
1971	91	45
1972	87	48
1973	79	50
1974	72	46
1975	72	44
1976	75	51
1977	96	54
1978	83	54
1979	80	55
1980	86	53
1981	74	48
1982	73	--
1983	83	--
1984	79	46
1985	79	47
1986	81	48
1987	75	46
1988	82	45
1989	84	45

Church Ministries Profile

Services

The church has Sunday School and morning worship services every Sunday, and prayer meeting and Bible study every Wednesday evening.

Church Committees

Hickory Rock has the following committees: Nominating, Executive, Finance, Building and Grounds, Youth and Holidays, Senior Adult, Community Missions, Ushers, Recreation, Christmas, Tape Ministry, Constitution and Bylaws, and Church Growth.

Ministry Rating

The ministries of the church were rated in the order listed in Table 10 using the "Church Data Questionnaire."

TABLE 10

CHURCH MINISTRIES RATING

<u>Ministry</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Sunday morning worship	Excellent
Sunday School	Excellent
Friendliness of church members	Excellent
Music ministry	Satisfactory
Wednesday evening	Satisfactory
WMU	Satisfactory
Children's ministry	Satisfactory
Fellowship activities	Satisfactory
Sunday nursery	Satisfactory
Spirit and sense of unity	Satisfactory
Financial stewardship	Satisfactory
Community concern	Satisfactory
Brotherhood	Needs improvement
Youth ministry	Needs improvement
Ministry of the deacons	Needs improvement
Evangelistic outreach efforts	Needs improvement

Opinion Profile

The following opinions were taken from the "Church Data Questionnaire." This questionnaire was administered during the worship service on Sunday, November 5.²⁰ Only five of the seven questions on the "Opinion Profile" section will be answered here. The most frequent answers are recorded in the order of popularity.

1. Why did you join this church?

I grew up in this church
This was my family's church
I married into this church
I like the people and it was close by
Because of a friend

2. What are the greatest strengths of Hickory Rock Baptist Church?

Love and fellowship of the members
People

3. What are the current needs of the church?

Outreach and visitation
Growth
Cooperation and love
Youth activities

4. What one thing would you like to see changed?

Begin a visitation program
I would like to see the people cooperate and pull together
Nothing, I like the church the way it is now
Better communication
More member participation
A concentrated music focus
Youth representation on committees

²⁰ The "Church Data Questionnaire" was used with permission of Dr. Harry H. Fowler, Creative Growth Dynamics, 129 Gulftide Court, Rocky Mount, NC 27801.

5. What do you see in the future for Hickory Rock?

Growth

Focus on youth ministry since that is where we lose people

Community Profile

Population

The population of Hickory Rock community is increasing slightly. This is shown as an increase in the Cedar Rock township in table 11. The population decreased from 1970 to 1980 and then increased 4.8 percent from 1980 to 1989. The township experienced only one-fourth the growth rate of Franklin County and one-half the growth rate of Louisburg.

TABLE 11

COMMUNITY POPULATION²¹

<u>Area</u>	<u>Year</u>			<u>% Change</u>
	1970	1980	1987	
Franklin County	26,820	30,055	35,205	+17.1%
Louisburg	2941	3238	3754	+ 8.9%
Cedar Rock Township	2184	2165	2269	+ 4.8%

Unchurched Estimates

It is claimed that 42.12 percent of the population of Franklin County (14,856 people) are unsaved. We can go one step further and

²¹ The statistics in Table 11 are taken from a study done by Urban Decision Systems; P.O. Box 25952; Los Angeles, California 90025; Telephone (213) 820-8931. The study was done at the request of Rev. Bob Watson of the Church Extension Department of the N. C. Baptist State Convention for Hickory Rock Baptist Church.

estimate that 42.12% of Cedar Rock Township (956 people) are unsaved.

Community Type

Hickory Rock Baptist Church is seven miles outside of Louisburg, the county seat of Franklin County North Carolina. Bute County was divided in 1779 to form Franklin and Warren Counties. The county was named for Benjamin Franklin who lived from 1706 until 1790. Franklin county produces corn, wheat, oats, tobacco, cotton, dairy products, hogs, livestock, textiles, apparel, furniture, lumber, and fabricated metals. Though the county has long been an agricultural area, it is gradually shifting to industrial and business with agriculture and agribusiness being prominent.

Louisburg is located in central Franklin County on the Tar River. The town was named Louisburg for French King, Louis XVI, to whose court Benjamin Franklin was then American representative. Louisburg is the home of Louisburg College, a Methodist junior college.²²

Hickory Rock Baptist Church is on the edge of Louisburg Township, however, the majority of the church community is located in Cedar Rock Township. The Baptist churches in Franklin County are older, more established churches that have little or no outreach ministry. There is a one percent growth trend in church membership of the Tar River Association. This trend reveals that the Tar River churches are baptizing mostly children of the congregation, which amounts to

²² This information was obtained from the 88-89 Louisburg-Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, Inc. Membership Directory and Buyers Guide. 4,5.

biological growth. Associational baptisms are not keeping pace with population growth. Table 12 gives more information about the Hickory Rock community.

TABLE 12
COMMUNITY DATA²³

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Years</u>		
	1970	1989 Estimate	1994 Projection
Avg Household Income	12,672	23,263	29,679
Avg Household Size	2.94	2.74	2.65
Race: White	2725	2542	2419
Race: Black	1787	1450	1297
Race: Hispanic	47	38	106
Median Age	32.7	36.5	39.1
Housing Units	1845	1447	1389

The Hickory Rock community is a near static community that experienced a decline in population from 1970 to 1980. There has been only a 4.8 percent growth rate in the subsequent seven years from 1980 to 1987. Notice that the 1994 projection predicts a declining black and white population. The church is located on state road 1002 about two miles from highway 561. The community is all farmland with several ponds dotting the countryside. There are no housing developments nearby. There is no new construction in the area.

Summary

Hickory Rock Baptist Church is a seventy-five year old church located in a near static rural community. Three-fourths of the members

²³ Ibid.

live within five miles of the church. Almost half of the members are over fifty years old with some college, a family income over \$30,000, and have been members of the church for over twenty years. Over the last nineteen years the church has enjoyed the following averages: resident membership 96, Sunday School enrollment 81, Sunday School attendance 49, baptisms 1.5, and yearly additions 4. When 1989 is compared with the averages of previous years the outcome is good except for the categories of Sunday School attendance (45), and baptisms (0). Resident and total church membership has had a rising trend since 1985. Average Sunday School attendance has shown a decreasing trend over the past ten years. None of these figures shows enough difference to indicate a problem.

The church's strengths are friendliness, the Sunday School, and the worship service. Weaknesses include the Brotherhood, youth, deacon and outreach ministries. The church needs a program of outreach and visitation. Hickory Rock has the opportunity to focus on repairing the weaknesses and to build on its strengths. These strengths and weaknesses (Brotherhood, youth, deacons, outreach, Sunday School, worship, and friendliness) are all included as part of a two year church growth plan.

